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E.O. 12812: SDS 2/7/85 (AMTUTTE, J. BRUCE) DP-4  
 TAGS: PGDV, ASEC, AF, US, PINR  
 SUBJ: MY MEETING WITH THE NEW AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER DR.  
 SHAH WALI

REF: STATE 201375

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY. LATE YESTERDAY, I PAID A COUNTERY CALL ON DR. SHAH WALI, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND NEW FOREIGN MINISTER. I HANDED HIM SECRETARY VANCE'S LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS, AND IN RESPONSE SHAH WALI ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS THANKS FOR IT. HE ALSO ASKED THAT I INFORM THE DEPT THAT AFGHANISTAN IS DESIROUS OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., THAT IT DOES NOT SEE ITSELF AS A THREAT TO AMERICA, AND THAT HE WAS SURE THE U.S. COULD NOT BE AGAINST THE CPA'S BASIC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. HE COMPLAINED ABOUT UNFRIENDLY AND DISTORTED VOAS AND AMERICAN PRESS COVERAGE OF AFGHANISTAN, BUT DID NOT DWELL ON THIS. DURING THE CONVERSATION, AMBASSADOR DUFF'S DEATH CAME UP AND I BRIEFED HIM ON HIS GOVT'S LACK OF COOPERATION WITH US IN TRYING TO CLEAR UP SOME OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFFAIR. HE THEN DEMAND THAT WE REDUCE THE SIZE OF OUR "MISSION", I REPLIED THIS WAS NOT THE OCCASION TO RAISE IT AND HE DID NOT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER LEAVES TODAY FOR A FOUR-DAY VISIT TO BULGARIA. END SUMMARY.

5. MY CALL ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER CAME ONE DAY AFTER THE ARRESTIVE ARMY MUTINY OF AUGUST 5. THE NERVOUSNESS OF THE REGIME WAS EVIDENT IN SECURITY AT THE MINISTRY. AT THE FRONT DOOR, TWO HEAVY MACHINE GUNS ON TRIPODS POINTED OUT THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOWS WITH UNIFORMED SOLDIERS STANDING NEARBY. IN THE ANTECHAMBER OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER, I SHARED THE SPACE WITH A SOLDIER WHO SAT AT AN IMPROVISED DESK WITH AN AN-47 RESTING ON THE TABLE TOP AND POINTED AT ME. WHEN I WAS LOCATED INTO THE MINISTER'S OFFICE, THE SOLDIER PICKED UP HIS WEAPON AND WALKED BEHIND ME TO THE DOOR, SUCH IS MANDALAY.

6. DR. SHAW WALI SEEMED PLEASED TO RECEIVE SECRETARY VANCE'S MSG. HE READ IT CAREFULLY AND SEEMED GLAD THE SECRETARY HAD SENT IT. I THINK IT WAS A TIMELY GESTURE. ALTHOUGH I AM NOT SURE THAT SHAW WALI CAUGHT ANY OF THE NUANCES IN THE PIECE. THE IMPORTANT THING TO HIM WAS PROBABLY THAT THE SECRETARY HAD TROUBLED TO SEND IT.

7. AS I STATED IN THE SUMMARY, SHAW WALI ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS GOVT'S DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, ASSUMING THE POSTURE OF AN AGGRIEVED AND MISUNDERSTOOD PARTY. HE RELATED THAT HIS GOVT HAD NEVER DONE ANYTHING AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, WAS HARDLY IN A POSITION TO BE A THREAT TO THE U.S., AND WAS SURE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE COULD NOT OBJECT TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS THE REGIME HAD TAKEN TO ABOLISH "FEUDALISM". I TOLD HIM I WOULD TRANSMIT THIS MSG.

8. WE TALKED FOR ABOUT 15 MINUTES. I HAD PLANNED TO LEAVE MUCH EARLIER, BUT EVERY TIME I STARTED TO RISE, HE WOULD INTERJECT A NEW QUESTION. BEING A SENSITIVE SITUATION IN OUR RELATIONS, I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO SEEM INTERESTED AND RESPONSIVE, AND TO TRY TO BUILD A MEASURE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MAN.

9. SHAW WALI IS SHY AND DIFFIDENT FOREIGN BORN AT HEART WITH OUTSIDERS, BUT LIVE THE LAST FIVE, LAST APRIL, HE WARMED UP IN TIME. HE SPEAKS SILENTLY - SOMETIMES IN A WHISPER, NEVER LOUD. HE SAYS MUCH, AND HE IS VERY BRIEF IN HIS ANSWERS. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL. AS THE RESULT OF OUR MEETING, HE HAD OUR PICTURES TAKEN, AND TOLD US WHETHER THERE WILL BE CARRIED IN THE LOCAL PRESS. I HAD NO NOTE-TAKER PRESENT.

10. AFTER SAYING THE REGIMEN WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., SHAW WALI COMPLAINED LOUDLY ABOUT TWO THINGS: MGA BROADCASTS, AND THE CRITICAL AMERICAN PRESS. HE DID NOT DWELL ON EITHER, AND I CAN ONLY POINT IN ENTERING A REBATE.

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RUGROD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9134

RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1729

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1875

RUSEAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7205

RUMMKS/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 381

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9. DURING THE CONVERSATION, AMBASSADOR DUBS' DEATH CAME UP. I CITED MENTION OF THE NAME TO BRIEF HIM ON OUR DISCONTENT WITH THE DRA'S COOPERATION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE AFFAIR. I TOLD HIM THAT FROM THE OUTSET OF THAT UNHAPPY FEBRUARY 14 INCIDENT, HIS GOVT HAD BEEN UNCOOPERATIVE. HIS MINISTRY HAS STILL NOT RESPONDED TO OUR LAST THREE DIP NOTES REQUESTING SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT DUBS' DEATH. I TOLD HIM THAT AN IMPORTANT REASON BEHIND CONGRESS' ACTION TO TERMINATE ECONOMIC AID WAS HIS GOVT'S PERFORMANCE IN THIS AFFAIR. SHAH WALI'S RESPONSE WAS NOT RANCOROUS. HE SAID THAT WHETHER OR NOT WE STOPPED AID WAS OUR BUSINESS. HOWEVER, IF THE USG, WITH ALL ITS RESOURCES COULDN'T CLEAR UP THE MYSTERIES ABOUT PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION, HOW COULD WE EXPECT THE DRA TO DO BETTER WITH RESPECT TO AMBASSADOR DUBS' DEATH.

10. I ALSO TOLD SHAH WALI THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WE WERE NOT PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE DRA OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, IT SEEMED EVIDENT TO US, FROM STATEMENTS IN THE DRA GOVT-CONTROLLED RADIO AND PRESS, THAT ELEMENTS IN HIS GOVT BELIEVED WE WERE DOING SO AND CERTAINLY SOUGHT TO CONVEY THIS IMPRESSION TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. I SAID THIS HAD HELPED THE CLIMATE FOR BETTER US-AFGHAN RELATIONS. IF WE HAD EVIDENCE OF US INVOLVEMENT, I SAID I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT IT. SHAH WALI MADE NO COMMENT.

11. COMMENT. I PLAN TO USE SHAH WALI'S EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR BETTER RELATIONS AS A LEVER TO TRY SOLVE SOME OF OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. I SUSPECT THAT WITHIN A FEW DAYS I WILL HAVE TO CALL ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DOST TO TRY TO FRY LOOSE OUR MARINE GUARDS' PASSPORTS WHICH HE HAS SO FAR REFUSED TO RETURN TO US. THIS IS IN CONNECTION WITH THE DRA'S DEMAND THAT WE REDUCE THE SIZE OF OUR MISSION. I WILL TELL DOST THAT IF SHAH WALI'S MSG OF DESIRING GOOD RELATIONS WAS SINCERE, I HOPE THIS CAN BE REFLECTED BY THE IMMEDIATE RETURN OF THE PASSPORTS WITH THE REQUESTED ENTRY/EXIT VISAS.

12. I AM NOT SURE AT THIS STAGE HOW MUCH CLOUT SHAH WALI HAS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. HAFAZULLAH AMIN IS STILL VERY MUCH THE STRONG MAN IN THE GOVT, AND WE HAVE SOME INFORMATION TO SUGGEST THAT HE CONTINUES TO EXERT A LARGE ROLE IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. I'M ALSO NOT SURE ABOUT DR. SHAH WALI'S VIEWS ABOUT THE U.S., NOTWITHSTANDING HIS EFFORT TO BE FRIENDLY TO ME. HE PROFFESSED TO BE AN ADMIRER OF AMERICA, BUT I THINK HE WAS DISSEMBLING THERE. DURING THE TIME HE WAS MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ACTING PLANNING MINISTER, WE WAS CONSISTENTLY OBSTRUCTIVE IN HIS DEALINGS WITH OUR USAID MISSION. GENERALLY, WE HAVE ASSESSED HIM AS BEING AMONG THE MORE HARD-LINE POLITBURO MEMBERS, AND NO FRIEND OF THE U.S. WE'LL SEE.

13. I HAVE JUST HAD A TALK WITH UK AMBASSADOR CROOK. HE MET WITH SHAH WALI SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER, AND TELLS ME THEY HAD A ROUGH SESSION (ESPECIALLY ON BBC) AND THAT THEIR WERE BARELY CONTROLLED. AMSTUTZ

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